RED & BLACK

an anarchist journal

No. 12

RED & BLACK

AN ANARCHIST JOURNAL

No 12 SUMMER 1984

CONTENTS

THE SCHOOL OF TODAY.....
by R. Calopa .....p. 3
ANARCHISM AND EDUCATION .....
by Melissa.....p. 6
AN ANARCHIST CRITIQUE OF TROTSKY
AND TROTSKYSM.....
by. G. Hill.....p. 9
HRISTO SMIRNENSKY.....
by Jack the A.....p. 19
THE FAILURE OF STATE COMMUNISM.....
by. R. Rocker.....p. 28
PAGES OF SOCIALIST HISTORY.....
by Tcherkesoff.....p. 40

FREEDOM IS NOT A CHOICE BUT AN ABSENCE OF A MASTER

Editor: J. Grancharoff

NEW ADDRESS. NEW ADDRESS. NEW ADDRESS

Red and Black,

P.O. Box 115

Enmore. N.S.W.

Australia 2042.

Single copy #A 2.00

Make all cheques out to

J. Grancharoff

DONATIONS WELCOME!

the school of today

The life of conscious women and men is nothing but a history of an implacable struggle against the education they have received, wherefrom the problem: I am not what I think I am, I am what I don't think I am.

No doubt in this respect, as a part of educational and codified knowledge, as a capitalist institution and its training representative (true of the Marxist-communist system too), the school, reflecting simultaneously the finalities and the methods inherited in the economic- cultural system, tries to achieve by the means of teaching and unilaterally appropriated methods, its own objectives. Therefore, if an analysis on the school be undertaken, but not centered on the school per se, but on the political-economic system which gives to it its exclusive particular significance, its reflex- content of the system which oppresses and arbitrates it, the resultant corollary will well be: the school is one of the manipulative institutions, who knows, perhaps the most pernicious to the social, individual and collective life. For any institution established as a supportive system to a power is not only instrumental to it, but exerts an active influence, of more or less importance, on the individuals who constitute it.

The spectacle we observe, to see how many families try - and pride themselves in finding a school for their children which justifies their conscious or unconscious adherence to the system that controls and directs them, offers nothing strange. In fact schooling penetrates deeply the make-up of our civilization. Very often the school outcome is mistaken to be life's outcome. Even something more, the parents come to consider that the education of their children -identified with training - is related to the exclusive competitiveness of the school. The school as an instrument, whose value is obvious to people, is becoming one of the essential revendications of our time. Nevertheless, this revendication cannot refute the vices and oppressiveness of the school.

In fact the permanent interaction between school and society produces the following dichotomy: on the socio-political level, the school is a total faithful reflexion and imitation of the society; while, on the other hand, to find in school one of the main causes of the socio-cultural illnesses implies that society is reflected in the school too. Granted that the school reflects social contradictions then, by natural Kropotkian deductions, not by Marxist dia-

lectics, it can be inferred that the school, by itself and in itself, can generate sufficient energies necessary for its own renovation. This was corroborated also by Francisco Ferrer y Guardia * in one of his letters refering to the role the reference books have played in his own Modern School.

It is an indubitable and an undeniable fact that the school in a productivist and a codified society will always be oppressive by necessity. The knowledge acquired in a pedagogical oppression is a dead knowledge, a reiteration of earlier affirmations, is not one created in educational freedom. Such knowledge, therefore, is always suspicious because it lacks polemical and analytical functions. Knowledge in school is a programmed teaching, an institutionalized knowledge, not a critical one on the basis of the apprenticeship self education.

Like Tantalus, the school is facing a continuous dilemma: submission to authority or reflecting a society whose members are immersed in the domination of man over man. Within this politics of domination and exploitation the school finds itself between power and obedience- or disobedience; or be it, resistance, rebellion and revolution. Without this social oppressive and enslaving policy the school will cease to be what has been and what is. In other words, there will be no school at all.

Politics is an organization of hierarchical relationships based on the power of a particular will over the others. It is on this power basiss that a group is established. The school is to serve more the will in power rather than those which submit to it. For these reasons scholastic institutions and their docile submissive consent -counting the redundancy - tend to insert the principle of domination and exploitation at all levels and domains. The following four categories appear to respond to it: a) science, b) technology, c)society and d) the State. The scientist formulates power but soon loses control over it. Power makes the politician. The school -from preschool to graduate and post graduate courses - reproduces and transmits knowledge. Power, whatever it is, is interested in it. Even something more, when a political power is suppressed by a certain convulsion, it is inequivocably to enthrone an other one which will continue demanding obedience. The school will continue to be indispensable for the new authority. It is an error to think that by changing the design and political leadership, by furthering the interests of one or another class, by changing from private to collective authoritarian property of the means of production will, by any means, modify the school system.

On the other side the role of the school is rather ambiguous: it mistakes training for education. Pedagogically speaking, to train is to make somebody competent in a given terrain, to make a worker for a specific job. Training is a partial undertaking. This is exactly what is often done in school today and it is eulogize by private and state capitalisms and programmed by them, but has no relationship to true education. Moreover, if the school is not good enough to guarantee people's education it is not capable to guarantee their

training either. No education can be acquired or received in a school that does not nor has the desire to make a rational distinction between these two. As far as the question of knowledge is concerned the school, because it teaches in accordance with an encyclopedical programme, subjects which have no relation to each other, is a bad instrucor. By trying to educate and train at the same time, the school accentuates its own failure. The failure is due to the fact that acquiring aptitudes and free aprenticeship(which characteristically are authentic educational labour) are in contradiction with a submission to a more or less rigid programme and with a scholarly obligation. The school, this "industry of knowledge" monopolizes and transfigures manuals, libraries, laboratories, maps and other usual objects, instead of satisfiying itself with obtaining the real educational weapons of life. Therefore, the content of teaching being a sequence to all advanced and industrially productive societies, it is subjected to the law of searching for maximum producttion, similar to a car factory which can only survive with the production - as well as the consumption - or the greatest possible numbers of cars; so the school proposes to give and to make maximum the possible consumption of "knowledge", providing that this knowledge carries the mark of manipulative obedience, institutionalized and codified values. They are already telling us that the educational relationship is a direct and intuitive living which does not require any theoretical and pre-established elaborations.

Definitely education is not domestication nor subordination but a struggle, unconformity, and tension. From the moment education ceases to see a conflict in the person, in the family, in the school, in the newspaper, in the radio, in television and so on, it ceases to be education. Since the process of schooling and culture comes to an end, the moment of educational liberation always vanishes. Power politics entangles everything and the school exists pathetically between strategy of power and its own consciousness of submission. Education is prostituted by the force of one or other dominator(master).

Ramon Calopa

*Selected Correspondence of F. Ferrer y Guardia, Supliment of Cenit No 198. Letter from his prison cell, passage 4 th, No 301.
(Translated from Ideas
Cero S. Coop Ltd, Pza Lesseps 10, entlo 2a, Barcelona 23)

next page on

Anarchism and Education

Education is this society is weeding out the workers. It is a selective process by which society encourages elitism and categorizes people. Already, at the age of 13 one has a good idea to which classification s/he belongs to: normal, average, intelligent. It is beyond saying that family background also plays an important role. But here I will try to state what the educational system means to me.

By the early teens, if not earlier, you are told that you should or should not seek to further your knowledge. If you have not made the grade as a potential administrator of one or other kind, you are kindly informed that you are wasting public money going to school and that you would be better of using your hands and settling down to a' good' job.

Socially, it means that you are a dumb-dumb and should grab the first opportunity which comes to your way. It is possible to get even a job in your dad' s factory.

Sometimes, the working class parents, to show to the system that they too have a brain, push their kids on to higher education. Kids like these, later on, are incorporated into the system that produces class divisions. Thus, sons and daughters become a part of an elite which rejects mothers' and fathers' background. Hence, paradoxically, the children of the workig class, once minced by the educational institutions, not only reject their working class background but become staunch supporters of the Establishment and in this manner re-enforce class society.

All this stated, it does not necessarily imply that education is not beneficial to human beings, provided that by education is meant: to bring out, to evoke, to awake up all dormant and potential forces necessary for making up of an individual and to furnish all available information for personal development.

It is nothing wrong searching for information, but it is definetely wrong to prevent people from seeking information. The educational system thus builds barriers, creates antagonisms, class differentiations, and alienates people from each other.

The student removed from customary environment, creates her/his own ethos and lives in permanent fear of failure because s/he ought to be a succes; as if universtity assessment has any bearing to his/her real becoming. His studies are more often irrelevant to a non student, perhaps to him/her self, communication is broken and they both view each other with suspicions.

A student of medicine becomes a doctor as soon as s/he acquires some papers , but to me a doctor is the one who can do the job, not the one who possesses some papers with an official stamp. S/he is like being a carpenter, who has a licence but is unable to do the job. It is up to the people to

decide who can or cannot do the job. A nice office and a poece of paper from the system are meaningless utensils unless reality verifies them.

If a struggle is waged to establish a society run by the people who live in it, this struggle cannot be won or even furthered by recourse to the Establishment, to the system. To become an academic, to search for the meaning of life by analysing every crumb while neglecting the whole, the everyday happenings and the surrounding of one's becoming, is to practice a futile exercise which is a past time of a class justifying its pecuniary position. Real education is a manifold event: reading, listening, participating in every-day life, relating experiences, debating hypotheses, communication and so on.

In an anarchist soceity education would be an open venture. All information would be available to all who are interested in learning. Learning will not occupy a privileged status. Those who are suited to be doctors will be doctors by the virtue of their dexterity not because of their papers; their hierarchical status. There would not be a Bond of Prestige. People who would like to be doctors would be so because they would truly care about health.

The foregoing expose indicates that deschooling is the only genuine anarchist alternative. To join the system is to re-enforce it. It is similar to joining the Police-force as way to get rid of it. Either you become a basher or you are out of it. I don't believe that one can work through the system to get rid of the system and its oppression. History indicates this time and again, and academics are not out of history. Those who consider themselves academics, will ultimately support the system which has created them, for it is in it that they find their security and their strength. Here a parallel can be drawn to some feminists who, in a different way, are trapped in a similar situation. They insist on working with only women when it comes to expressing themselves, for that is their security. Yet neither case leads to a change, for they both are keeping the system, which separates people, going.

A change can only come when people see each other as equals, reject the idea that one form of work is more important than another, or that because you have not studied or have been a part of something as long as them, you have no right to take part in the domain of their profession.

Thus, education can be seen as a way to re-produce the present day society, to reproduce hierarchies, privileges and intellectual elites; a continuating dehumanization of society which is becoming statistics, facts and figures.

Anarchism cannot be a part of a dehumanizing system, for anarchism means a way of life where people relate to each other at a grass-roots level, as people, as persons, as individuals; not as doctors, academics, journalists and so on. Education creates Gods, idols, masters and builds sys-

tems in which the individual ought to be subservient and the personal ought to be suppressed. Anarchism qua anarchism is a denial of such a system of education and, therefore, incompatible with it.

Melissa.

an anarchist critique of trotsky and trotskyism

Chapter I

Marxism and Anarchism

To the Marxists human will and personality cannot determine what occurs, what does make things occur. Dialectical materialism assumes that in everything that exists there are contradictions. These contradictions cause conflicts and progress: decaying societies fall apart when the contradictions within them come into conflict and they make way for a new stronger society that has solutions to the contradictions that tore the previous one apart. Society, from a Marxist point of view, moves in progressive steps.

The barbarism of the dark ages gave way to feudalism, a progressive form, because it restored order and economic productivity. Feudalism then gave way to capitalism which in turn will give way to socialism and power will be handed over the largest class, the workers. In owing and controlling the means of production they will control state and society. The other classes whose historical role will have been fulfilled will eventually merge into the proletariat. In such a society, made up of one class, there will be no conflicts, no clashes and the state power will wither way - after the dictatorship of the proletariat is achieved.

To Marx, culture, beliefs, personal motivation and conflicts are caused by economics; more specifically by the means of economic production. The inequality in the means of production implies that some parts of the world are more progressive than others. As the capitalist productive methods are more progressive either than primitive or feudal ones, it is, therefore, necessary and desirable that these lesser societies should give way or be made to give way to capitalism - Marx's historical necessity. In practical terms the destruction of the world's primitive societies by nineteenth century colonialism was desirable. The widespread death, misery and gross exploitation; the beginning of the ecological disaster we are now witnessing; the colonial scramble that led to dozens of minor wars before culminating in two

World Wars, (with may be another on the way) were historical necessities. All these are related to a capitalist belief that some nations because they are advanced have the right to conquer others and spread progress. Hitler's desire to rule over the barbarian Slavs and spread German culture and order over Europe was a right wing version of that, related to "manifest destiny" a metaphysical contemporary of Mars's "historical necessity". The left wing version was supplied by Marx and Engels themselves.

"This 'nation' (a Slav Federation) which historically does not exist at all, seeks restoration of its independence. The Stubborn Czechs and Slovaks should be grateful to the Germans who have taken the trouble to civilized them by introducing them to commerce, industry, agricultural science and education.

"To the sentimental phrases about fraternity which we are here offered (in a pro Slav article by Bakunin) in the name of defense of counter-revolutionary nations of Europe, we reply: that hatred of the Russians was and remains the primary revolutionary passion of the Germans; that once the revolution extends to the Czechs and the Croatians we, together with the Poles and the magyars can safeguard the revolution only by the most determined terrorism against these Slav peoples (1)." (Written by Engels and approved by Marx).

This, naturally, flagrantly contradicts other statement by Marx: "In short the Communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things...Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries unite (2)."

No two quotes more clearly show the conflicting ideas within Marx's head and within Marxist theory.

However it is not only 'inferior races' that will be suppressed but individuals qua individuals. As everything is economics, individuality originates with either the egoism of medieval rulers or the independence of the petty bourgeois factory owner making decisions by himself. Individuality is related to freedom. But freedom is impossible, unless the means of production have totally mastered economic problems. (In a conversation with this writer one Libertarian Marxist went as far as to define this. When the tides are under control, when the crops are infallibly grown to exactly reach their production quotas, when the class wars are a dim memory of eras gone by, in other words when the contradictions are solved, then and only then is possible to talk of freedom.

While it is true that contradictions are often inherent in many things it is not proven that they exist in everything. That economics influences many things, from social values and morality to culture, is true, but it is also true that economics and more particularly the means of production are not the sole determinants of everything.

People are something more than unknowing powers. They adapt to suit changes. Many of the aristocratic families of Europe still hold their prestige and power. They have gone from the feudal barbarism to late capitalism and have been able to take over new modes of production, and sometimes increased their power and wealth, not merely holding it. At times they suppressed inventions because they saw their potential effect. Human will-power also has more determining power than Marx credited. Napoleon and Alexander the Great were not motivated by economic greed but by a need to satisfy their illusions of glory. Ideas such as militarism and nationalism gave them their power base and economics played little part in these two ideas. Violence and bloodshed arouse sensations of excitement. The conquest of opponents gives a sense of gratification and security. These primitive emotions, more than economic gains, often make the appeal of militarism. Nationalism can strengthen a group's sense of unity, give it pride and confidence, which it needs for survival. Economics may or may not be tied to the universal issues but conflicts occur for reasons others than economics: suppressed sexuality, insecurity caused by a contact with unknown factors, the urge for self-gratification, domination etc.

Marx claimed that his system was based on logical discussion made after studying reality in a totally objective analytical manner. All his followers claim the same. Yet Marx, for opportunistic reasons, made a quick jump in 1871 from supporting the German invasion of France to supporting the revolution (3).

His feuding followers follow his footsteps. To give one example. The ecology movement started at a time when Marxists were praising industrialization and were enthusiastic about "man's battle to conquer and subdue nature". Then they saw a movement growing outside their grasp. Hence they found a few quotations from here and there about the ugliness of the slums, publicise them while ignoring all the awkward sections, and produce a magazine called "Marxism and Ecology" and hey presto Marxism is about ecology. The same applies for feminism and anti-militarism. Marxists claimed they had a scientific logical form of socialism with methods of analyses that would lead to socialist victory. In fact, they have a dogma with many contradictory sacred texts that enables them to take whatever form is popular at a given time. At present an emphasis on individuality and freedom are predominant. Therefore, some selected passages from his early work are carefully selected. The more authoritarian passages, the core of the philosophy, are kept well out of the spot light until another era needs them, when, like costumes worn by long gone actors, they will be given a dusting and worn before the limelight again, in front of captive audience.

*** *** ***

Marx had field day criticizing his anarchist contemporaries, Their idealism and inconsistency gave him ammunition galore. Yet anarchist criticism of Marx was correct as well. As early as 1846 Proudhon stated the basic disagreements in his famous reply to Marx's suggestion that they work together:

"By all means let us work together to discover the laws of society, the ways in which these laws are realized and the process by which we are able to discover them. But, for God's sake, when we have demolished all a priori dogmas, do not let us think of indoctrinating the people in our turn. Do not let us fall into your compatriot Martin Luther's inconsistency. As soon as he had overthrown Catholic theology he immediately, with constant recourse to excommunications and anathemas, set about founding a Protestant theology. For three hundred years Germany's whole concern has been to destroy Luther's hodgepodge. Let us not make further work for humanity by creating another shambles. I wholeheartedly applaud your idea of bringing all shades of opinion to light. Let us have a good and honest polemic. Let us set the world an example of wise and farsighted tolerance, but simply because we are leaders of a movemnt let us not instigate a new intolerance. Let us not set ourselves up as the apostles of a new religion, even if it be the religion of logic or reason. Let us welcome and encourage all protests, let us get rid of all exclusiveness and all mysticism. Let us never consider any question exhausted, and when we have used our very last argument, let us begin again, if necessary, with eloquence and irony. On this condition I will join your association with pleasure, otherwise I will not (4)."

Bakunin also attacked Marx's economic determinism and authoritarian approach. He correctly pointed out that not all new societies that emerge from conflict are beneficial, and that people have more control over the economy than Marx allowed for. He correctly foresay where a Marxist workers' state would lead to: ex-workers ruling over society through a party, using all the verbal aggrandisment of the revolution while the regimented proletariat would eat, sleep and work in a barracks-room discipline, living to the beat of a drum. He also foresaw the inquisition with dictatorial powers: the technocrats and privileged scientists. In 1872 Bakunin saw what Trotsky and his contemporary followers could not see a hundred years later and after so many revolutions. Marxist state would be as dictatorial as any small one. Dictatorships rest on force and obedience not the territorial boundaries of their power.

The anarchists had not all the answers nor had they built an infallible system, as the Marxists did, based on a pre-ordained future. They did not have sweeping generalizations about "the masses", "the Workers" or "the proletariat", nor did they have a mechanical deterministic view of history. What did they have was an aim, ideas and principles how to achieve the future society. The aim was a society which would supply everybody with

their basic needs and leave each individual alone to choose, develop and relate with others as they wished on the basis of affinity. In such a society the means of production and distribution would be geared to enable the greatest amount of free time. One problem would be to make industry as pro-life as possible and, yet, with minimum time and labour spent. This sounds utopian, yet so would our electric motors and press button conveyer belts to an 1860's factory labourer.

Their ideas were that a free society would never be achieved as long as some people held authority over others. This is why anarchists have always opposed the State, church, army, capitalists, personal domination and hierarchical political parties. They also opposed dogmas, religions and soon Marxism, because subservience to an idea was as bad as subservience to a person.

Like Marx they were materialists and wanted the end of kings, parliaments and the capitalist class. Along with some brands of Marx's thought, they were internationalists. Like Marx they believed that the workers should own and run the factories but,unlike Marx, they did not believe that the factories should be run for the workers state. The anarchists saw that the workers run the factories for themselves and the society in general.

Chapter.II

Political developments in Russia and the early life of Leon Trotsky 1879-1914.

The first Marxist party within Russia was established in 1883, the year Marx died. Marx saw little chance of socialism being achieved there. Although just before his death he modified his opinion in a little known letter to Vera Zasulich, one of the founders of Russian Marxism*. Still it became a basic Marxist belief that Russia would be one of the last parts of Europe to see a socialist revolution. The first Marxist party was formed by an ex-narodnik student, George Plekhanov and Vera Zasulich. While still small and ineffectual, Marxism increaded in strength and influence in the last years of the nineteenth century.

In 1898 another large group was formed, the Russian Social Democratic Party (R.S.D.P.). Plekhanov had two co-leaders, Vera Zasulich and Paul Axelrod and beneath them younger lieutenants Jules Martov, his sister Lydia, his brother in law Theodore Dan and two others, Rostrov and Lenin. Twenty years into the future Lenin would become master of Russia and all these other leaders of Russian Marxism would become his enemies and victims.

Several steps lower down the pyramid were two newcomers to Marxism and R.S.D.P. , Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin. Their backgrounds had

many similarities. Both were born in late 1879 in the outer provinces of the Russian Empire. Trotsky in the Southern Ukraine, Stalin - in Georgia. Both had small town backgrounds, became interested in politics roughly at the same age, rebelled against their fathers, became Marxists and R.S.D.P. members about 1899 or 1900. Lenin thought higlly of both of them. Both became famous by assumed names. (Trotsky was born Lev Bronstein, Stalin-Josef Djugashvili).

However there were also wide differences. Trotsky was a westernized intellectual from middle class Jewish origins. He started as writer and orator - a man of ideas. Stalin was an anti-Semitic roughneck, a brigand. Lenin used him for bank robberies, arranging strikes and riot activities.

Later this difference would become less clear-cut. Stalin would edit the RSDP paper Pravda and write volumes of turgid theory. Trotsky would become commander of the Red Army and organizer of anti Stalinist tendencies. Despite this, the difference would remain and partially explain why Trotsky was murdered in exile and Stalin ruled Russia for thirty years. One was a cunning pragmatist, out to achieve aims, the other a clever intellectual striving to achieve ideas.

Trotsky was jailed for political work in 1898 and exiled with his newly married wife in 1900 to Siberia. It was only during this imprisonment that he became a Marxist and an atheist (1).

In 1902 with his wife Alexandra's encouragement he left her and their two daughters Zina and Zinada and escaped; soon making his way to Eruope where the RSDP leadershio ran the party from exile. While in Paris he met Natalya Sedora, a twenty year old Ukrainian radical. The relationship between them would last until Trotsky's death. They had two sons born in 1906 and Sergi born in 1908. Their relationship was a happy one and Natalya was his most loyal co-worker.

As soon as he arrived in London, Trotsky rushed to see Lenin. The two men had never met before fut each had been impressed by the other's writings. At first they got on well but in 1903 Lenin decided to split the RSDP. He felt, with justification, that the older leaders were resting on their reputaion and RSDP in exile was doing very little.

However Lenin went about this move with an alienating domineering arrogance. He was never good-tempered or tolerant at his best and he was suffering from an excruciatingly painful illness at this time. His manner alienated nearly everyone. Trotsky would describe him as "hideous", "dissolute", "demagogical", "malicious and morally repulsive" (2).

Trotsky compared Lenin to Robespierre - the cold-blooded dictator of the French Revolution who guillotined his opponents. It was a clever comparison. They had a similarity in facial features and expression and used the same

cold logic. Lenin at first believed the comparison to be complementary but this was refuted by Trotsky's further denunciations of him as a vanguardist, a dictator waiting for an opportunity and an authoritarian. The truth in Trotsky's analysis can be seen by comparing his words with Lenin's rule thirteen years later.

"The counterpart to their absolute faith in a metaphysical idea was their absolute distrust of people"(Lenin and Robespierre)

"Robespierre used to say: 'I know only two parties: the good and evil citizens' and this aphorism is engraved on the heart of Lenin whose malicious and morally repulsive suspiciousness is a flat caricature of tragic Jacobin intolerance. Lenin's method leads to this: the party organization at first institutes itself for the party as a whole, then the central committee substitutes itself for the organization and finally a single "dictator" substitutes himself for the central committee. . . This intricate task (the sorting out of false revolutionaries) cannot be solved by placing a few well picked people. . . or one person invested with the power to liquidate and degrade (3)."

Lenin's faction became known as the Bolsheviks, Plekhanov's -as the Mensheviks. Between them were various RSDP centrist groups (The centrist groups were in theory neutrals between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks but tended to make alliances with one or the other on different issues and at different times). All these factions were fused together as the RSDP until 1911. Trotsky joined the Mensheviks but left them for the centrists in late 1904 (4). He would not work closely with the Bolsheviks until late 1915 and was not a Bolshevik party member until September 1917 when they were only weeks away from seizing power (5). Even during the First World War enmity between them was strong. In 1915 Lenin had described Trotsky as: "Trotsky as always, is in principle, opposed to the socialist chauvinists but in practice he is always in agreement with them."

Two years later in a letter to Alexandra Kollontai he expressed his feeling even more succinctly:"What a swine he is (6)."

In early 1905 a revolution broke out in Russia. The Czar Nicholas II tried to rule the Empire autocratically as his father had done but he lacked the strength and intelligence as he was an easily led weakling with none of the mental qualifications needed for even the mildest forms of political rule, let alone autocracy.

The ineptitude at the top of the autocracy was contemporary with great changes in the social structure. Russia was still backward but it was being modernized fast. Heavy industry and railways were producing trade unions. Universities were growing and increasing in numbers. They were, like the trade unions, breeding grounds for revolutionary-minded people tired of the autocracy. Even the massive peasantry were moving forward, becoming better educated, more discontented, less isolated. In the 1860's, for ex-

ample, the average peasant believed the world was flat and did not know that other countries outside the Empire existed. They believed that every morning their beloved Czar literally ascended to heaven to talk over the daily running of the kingdom with God. While rebelling against the nobles they saw the Czar as their savior and protector. However from the 1890's on the peasantry were moving forewards and after 1905 Czarism would increasingly be seen as a part of their oppression.

At the same time the workers, intellectuals and professional classes were tired of the lack of human rights, of the economic exploitation of working for virtually nothing, and generally of living under a fuedal dictatorship in the twentieth century.

As in 1917 the revolution of 1905 was in the long term a result of these causes but was immediately caused by Russia's involvement in a disatrous war. The 1904-05 war was with Japan. By the early 1905, to everyone's surprise, Japan was winning. This sparked off protest marches that were met with violence that left many hundreds dead. A general strike started in Saint Petersburg and spread. Barricades appeared in some cities.

At this stage Trotsky and Natalya Sedova returned and Trotsky threw himself into the revolution with energy, enthusiasm, courage and theatrics. He warned against trusting the liberals who merely wanted an English-style parliamentary democracy. He was correct. They backed down at the first offers of a compromise with the autocracy. These compromises weakened the revoltjionary movement and made the victory of the autocracy possible. By January 1906 the revolution had been violently crushed but its effects far reaching. The autocracy wasliving on borrowed time: either it modernized its rule or it would collaple. The bitterness of the crushed rebels would nurture into the events of 1917. The Mensheviks were fairly discredited as they had stated that as the proletariat was vastly outnumbered by the peasantry so the revolution could only be a bourgeois peasnat revolution. A workers' revolution would come later as industry spread. By taking this line they left the Bolsheviks as the only revolutionary Marxist alternative. They would make the same mistake again in 1917.

The major effect of 1905 was the creation of workers councils(the soviets). It is still uncertain how they were formed. The Bolshevisk would later claim they formed them but this is false, others would claim they were based on the workers committees of the French Revolution.

The anarchist historian Voline claimed that they were formed by workingmen after he and George Nassar addressed them (9). May be they originated from the government facked workers' committees, reformist groups set up to serve as a cul de-sac for discontent.

Whatever their origins, the soviets were an extremely powerful force; a

union of soviets could administer the whole country and serve as the production and decision-making forms for a socialist soceity of the future. If the soviets had build-in saveguards to ensure they did not become another union bureaucracy and if they expaneded to include community and affinity groups and covered all section of the population, they could serve as the basic structure for building a libertarian soceity.

Unfortunately the libertarians in Russia were few and scattered, many of them were politically naive radicals.

It was Lenin andTrotsky who shrewdly combined the power of the soviets with the popular slogans of the anarchist movement -and then used this combination to get into power in 1917. To paraphraze Trotsky, the workers replaced the people, the party ruled the workers, the party was ruled by the central committee and the Central Committee was dominated by the party boss. At first this was Lenin whom Trotsky had identified as a future dictator in 1904, then -Stalin and now Stalin's successors.

In late 1905 Trotksy himself was briefly at the top, substituting himself for the working class in decision-making when he became President of the Saint Petersbourg Soviet for eleven days, although he had never been a union member or even done one day's normal employment -apart from a brief enforced clerical job during his first exile.

He was not the first president of the Russian soviets as Trotskyi sts often claim. George Nassar, a middle class opportunist preceded Trotsky in this position and there was little inter-action between the soviets of different areas. The St. Petersbourg soviet did not rule the Russian left in 1905. On December 19th, Trotsky and the soviet were arrested and jailed. Although they were armed, Trotsky ordered everyone to surrender. This may have been a good move to avoid bloodshed in a futile battle with a well armed enemy. It may have been a stupid surrender. We only have Trotsk's account and he strongly suggests the first alternative (8).

He was imprisoned for nearly a year before his trial. He spent most of his time elaborating the theory of permanent revolution with Alexander Helplard (alia Parrus). In October 1906 Trotsky was tried and sentenced to exile in Siberia but escaped, making his way to Europe. Between 1907 and 1914 he and his family travelled through Europe, His efforts in politics went into acrimonious faction fighting and debating theory. Yet the brilliance and cleverness of his writing, his activities in 1905, his two escapes and his strong personality were making him well known to the revolutionary movement.

Notes. Chapter I

1. An article by Engels approved by Marx in Nue Rheinische Zeitung, Feb. 14th 1849. Reproduced in Bakunin On Anarchy by Sam Dolgoff, pp29 and New York 1972.

2. Karl Marx and Frederich Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party, London 1847. All quotes Progress Press Edition 1965, Moscow.

3. See early chapters of the Civil War in France, and a letter of July 20 th 1870, Karl Marx to Frederic Engels quoted in Marx and Anarchism by Rudolf Rocker, reprined in Red and Black 8, Sydny, Summer 1978/9.

4. Pierre Joseph Proudhon, A letter to Karl Marx 17 th May 1846 in the The Anarchis Reader, ed. George Woodcock, Glazgow Gontana/Collins 1977, pp. 138-40.

Notes -Chapter II

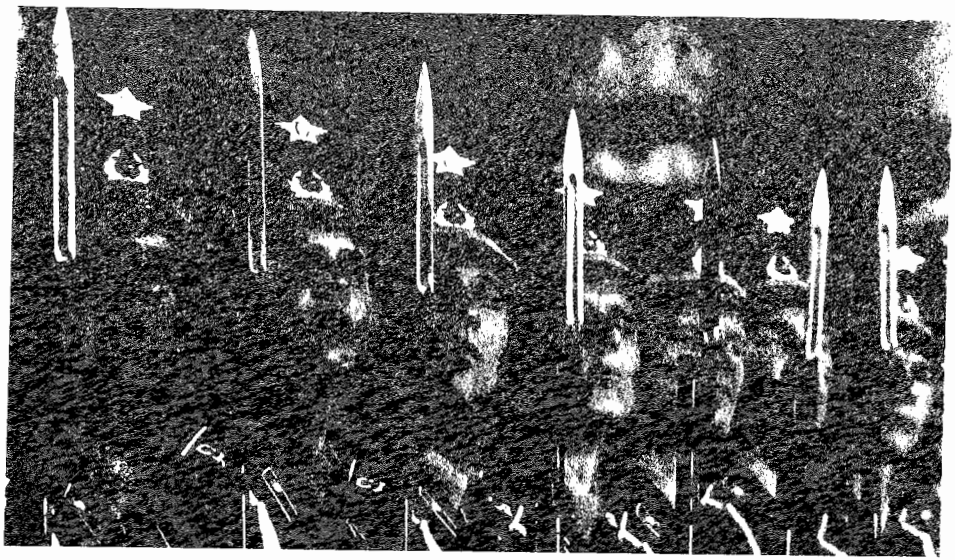
1.
1: Leon Trotsky, My Life, An attempt at Autobiography, New Yoork, 1970, pp. 117 -122

2. Isaac Deutscher, The Prophet Armed, New York andToronto, 1965 , p. 90

3, Ibid, pp. 89 -93.

4. Ibid, pp. 105-6.

5, Ibid, pp. 287-89.
6. Robert Payne, The Life and Death of Leon Trotsky, p. 165.
7. David Floyd. Russian in Revolt, 1905. pp. 4 -39.
8. Leon Trotsky, "1905". Moscow 1922, new Penguin ed. pp246-7
9. Voline, The Unknown Revolution, Solidarity Edition, Detroit, 1974. pp. 96-101.



Hristo Smirnensky and the tale of the staircase

Revolutionary culture is a rare, rare flower which, from time to time, beautifies our life and arouses hopes in the heart of the down-trodden human beings. In depth it expresses the human longing for justice, equality, freedom and happiness. It negates the established values, morality and hierarchies, and aims at breaking the chains which suffocate all human aspirations and bind people to slavery. Unfortuately
bind people to slavery. Unfortunately, the search for equality, brotherhood, sisterhood, socialist-communalist modes of production, distribution and living, new patterns of egalitarian behaviour, of harmonious existence of individual growth and development are vitiated by the avant-garde "revolutionaries" for whom revolution means that they themselves become the new elite, the new masters, the new rulers, cruel like Stalin and pitiless like Robespierre, The people find themselves in new chains, euphemistically referred to as "progressive", "socialistic" and "democratic" to soothe the burden of exploitation. The vision of just new society sometimes has an ephemeral existential import, like lightning in the depth of darkness. The revolutionary culture, therefore, can be perceived as the epic tragedy of humanity written by the blood of have-nots, idealists, dreamers and genuine revolutionaries who think that their sacrifices will herald a new era without masters, without slaves, classes, rich and poor.

Many writers who have lived under the spell of this magical ephemeral moment and who sided with the hopes and the longings of the plebeians to destroy all the Bastilles of oppression, have captured the impetus of the revolutionary exstasy in rhythm, rhyme and immortalized it. But many came to realize, sooner or later, that their revolutionary poetry had become the red carpet on which passed tyrants stained in the blood of the wretched of the earth. For the honest writer, the primary enthusiasm burned into black universal despair, sadness and disappointement and they sound the alarm.

Smirnensky even if his communist faith accompanied him to the last sigh. was one of them.

He forsaw the tragedy of a movement which claimed to be revolutionary, to have the historical mission to liberate the proletariat, while in fact it betrayed the revolution as well as the proletariat. The leaders main interest was to satiate their power appetite rather than lo liberate the masses. They substitued slogans, deceptions, power, manipulation and hierarchy for revolution. Seeing that, Smirnensky protested by writing his swan song: The Tale of The Staircase. But before coming to The Tale of The Staircase let me introduce the writer to the English-speaking public.

Smirnensky was born on 30 th of September 1898 in Koukoush, a town of 12-13,000 people, situated then within the confines of Otoman Empire. The majority of the population were of Bulgarian origin. He finished the 4th class in Koukoush in 1908 and afterwards went to Sofia to continue his education. However after the death of his grand father he had to go back to his native town. When he finished the pro-gymnazium (first form) his parents wanted to enrol him in the Bulgarian gymnazium in Teselonika, but their intentions were frustrated because they could not afford such an expensive school. Anyhow the Balkan War soon broke out and the hopes of liberation ran high. Twenty days later, on 25 th of October 1912, some units of the 7 th Rila division entered and liberated Koukoush. But this did not last for long. In 1913 war between the members of the Balkan alliance began and on June 21 st the Greek army occupied Koukoush, burnt the town and massacred the population which had remained in the town (the rest having marched with the Bulgarian Army towards Bulgaria). Among the survivors was the family of Hristo Smirnensky. This horrible debacle was soon to be followed by another one. Bulharia, an ally of the Central Powers was defeated again. Towards the end of the war the Bulgarian Army rebelled against the corrupted Koburg monarchy and tried to established a republic. This attempt was drowned in the blood of the rebel soldiers, workers and peasants who had fought under the auspices of the Agrarian Party.

At the time Smirnensky was a junker. Like many patriotic Bulgarians he could see clearly the outside enemy but rarely the enemy inside, the corrupt monarchical and military caste and the rotten Bulgarian Bourgeoisie. It was the junkers, the faithful dogs of the monarchy, who were sent to crush the rebellion. Smirnensky was among them. An old soldier instead of shooting at him, said to him: "Where do you go son? Go back! Let those who sent you here pay for that!"

This heart-rendering case has such an impact on Smirnensky that he decided to see for himself the case of the rebels. He crossed the rebel line and saw the plight of the dead, wounded and starving soldiers and population. He discovered, perhaps to his amazement, that the real enemy was not an outsider but the forces of the Establishement: the forces in whose

service he was. These bitter facts precipitated the end of his military career. On the November 1918 he gave up the military academy for good. George Karaslavov marks this event with the following words: "Smirnensky, who with all his being had rebelled against the barbaric discipline of the Koburg Military Academy, joined the rank of the most disciplinary party (The Communist Party)(1)." Had Smirnensky been alived in 1948 when these words were written, he would have been amazed to see that the most disciplinary party, in theory and practice, had become more fascist that any Bulgarian fascist party and acquired all bourgeois virtues and vices. Karaslavov, as a socialist realist, remained blind to socialist reality, a reality of oppression, of exploitation, of slavery, of the socialist workers' hell.

In the military academy Smirnensky realized the brutalizing aspects of militarism and how easily people become pawns and servants of the system. Karaslavov pointed out that for Simirnensky t be an officer of "the Koburgs' satraps... of the hopelessly rotten bourgeois class (2)" was not an easy matter because he was a sensitive soul. But not many officers are sensitive souls, aware or opposed to brutalizing military discipline. And if comrade Karaslavov tacitly tries to defend the officers of the vigourous socialist caste, he should know better that he is promoting a myth, an ideology to hide an ugly reality of caste, classes, order-givers and order-receivers, of privileges and slaves. An officer, and for that matter a soldier, is always a lackey of one or another class, of one or another party, of one or another master. He never serves the interests of the people qua people. The history of authoritarian socialism exhibits glaring examples: the role of the Kurssanty in the Kronstadt uprising, and more recently in Poland, when the "socialist army" was used to crush and destroy the workers, the black masses of slaves which Smirnensky extol so much.

The war efforts had impoverished the country and enriched the speculators who capitalized on human misery to amass fortunes. To protest meant death or imprisonment for the sake of state security. To quote Karaslavov again: "Corruption, robberies, bribes, plundering of the people, arbitrariness of small and big public servants, had taken frighful dimensions. Everywhere people were terrorized, The censorship on correspondence and the printed word strangled the most feeble attempt to criticize and to protest(3)." Unfortunately this description applies faithfully to modern socialist Bulgaria too.

Soon after the war, the Agrarian Party took over the government and internal liberalization improved remarkably. There was an outburst of revolutionary energies; a search for new ways out of the mess. The most progressive people wanted the end of the Koburg's dynasty, the end of privileges and exploitation. Smirnensky joined the pleiad of young revolutionaries fighting for the new classless, egalitarian and libertarian society. Thinking that the

communist party was the way towards such a goal, he joined the party in 1920 and remained a member until his death, which occurred on 8 June 1923, only a few days after the fascist military coup on 9 th of June 1923.

The terror and reprisal that ensued, decimated the ranks of the A-grarian Party and all progressive movements. The Communist Party, which welcome the coup d'etat as a tactical approach, as a struggle waged by two bourgeois factions, was not spared either. Had Smirnensky been alive his life would have been in danger. He hated the bourgoisie as a source of all social evils and the latter was not going to be lenient to him. One has to glance at his poetry to realize it.

The First May
Bring the factories chimneys to a standstill
and the all black labour too,
and let this sullen sea
of weary slaves
illuminate and beautify
the smile of the first of May.
.....
The purple dawn heralds
a death to the oppressive night
and the new day
brightens the dark wood
and each ray radiates
the victorious call of the First of May.

The red dawn is the death to the oppressive capitalism, while the smile of the First of May announces this death when the tired slaves will rebel against their chains, for freedom, bread and space. The Communist Party will lead the rebellion. Instead it did not. And when 20 years later the Party has the opportunity to realize the Smirnensky poetical dreams, instead, it established a nightmare for the proletariat, chains for the brain, tears in the eyes, and pains in the hearts of the wretched slaves. The red Dawn bathing in the shadows of blood forebode a dark era over the proletariat and the oppression regained again its streng th. In the east and the west the night still reigns and the poetical justice is but a longing.

In his song We he describes the curse of the slaves who produce the goods but die in poverty. And he hopes that one day they will become aware of their strength. They will rebel against their unhuman conditions and restore human dignity. The children will posses the earth again and the brothers and sisters will live in equality:

We are all children of the mother earth
but strange is to us her feeding breast,
in the giddy circle of our earthy course

we yearn for l gl
but die in gloom.
We the poor children of the mother earth!
For us sings the lash, over us weighs the yoke
and of the golden metal that oppressive law;
in misery we grow, in sorrow -languish,
on our path blood and tears drizzle,
we ashen mortals - for life we are born!
....
Nature beats through our hearts,
life is carried on our shoulders,
yet we are an ocean of moaning waves.
we bow heads...
we, eternal creators, weary fighters
But the day of reckoning is near
waves will arouse and roll high with roar
since our sacred anger seethes with rage...
We, too, are children of the mother earth!

Let us hope that one day we all, without colour, race and age, will be children of the mother earth and look at the past with shame and disgust.

He prsise

He praises the Red Army which, in the face of barbarism, is building a "new life" and a "new society". What a sweet illusion, a potical dream. Can an army be liberator? Never! He exposes the social vices of the bourbeoisie, of class-ridden society, such as flesh for sale:

The night is your implacable step mother,
pitiless and horrible too.
...
Under the glitter of electric lights
eternal sin you celebrate
and laugh in such a way
that even you hardly can grasp
the pain in your laugh (Prostitute)

Upon her radiant youth
as black tentacle glances glide...
and an unfriendly thought in sarcastic smiles gushes out
that flowers are for purchase and a lovely flower is she. (The Flower Seller).

Smirnensky always sustained the hope that one day the hierarchical layers of social oppression will be destroyed by the revolutionary rage. To prepare the final attack against the bourgeois order the mission of the conscious revolutionaries is to go among the masses, to descend to the prole-

tariat, and identify themselves with them. This idea is embodied in his The Miner:

Downwards! Downwards! Downwards.
in cold precipices descend
where half naked bodies writhe by the black wall;
where iron muscles tauten
and their blows aminds the blackness of dark abyss
sound in protest for cheerful days,
in protest for rest, for freedom,
air, space and breadth.
Downwards, downwards, downwards, -
descend downwards,
Descend in those dark wombs
of the predatory mother earth
descend amids the brother slaves-
in the sea of eternal gloom,
where your pale lamp
will there be a bright star,
there, a sheaf of beams will scan
the sinister temple of labour,
those sinister idols,
here there are no nights nor days.
Downwards, downwards, downwards-
descend downwards!
...
Descend down there and with faithful blows
smash, whack, destroy,
break up those black layers-
those servile souls.

For Smirnensky a revolutionary fighter is one who breaks human servility and prepares the slaves for a revolutionary changes which will end slavery once for ever. But genuine revolutionaries are a rare species. Revolutionaries are often made of conservative stuff, by anti-social reactions, individual interests and power obsession. For them the masses are a sacrificial material, as usual, to be offered to Molocks of power. Smirnensky had become aware of that. He realized also that the revolutionary slogans and catchwords were substitutes for revolution. The Bulgarian Communist Party played an ideological game. Its main interest was not the liberation of the proletariat but how to occupy the chair of t he bourgeoisie which would be vacated at the morrow of the revolution. When the fascist-military coup d'etat occured in June 1923 the Communist Party, as a party, remained as observer while the peasants and the workers were slaughtered. Once its opponents eliminated it would be the only alternative power. Many

a rank and file communist joined the fight against the nascent fascism but the bourgeoisie with foreign help, and betrayal within the government, was able to eliminate Stamboliisy's government - with a death toll of more than 30,000 people. This was the first mass masacre of the most progressive Bulgarian youth, the intellegentsia and the revolutionaries. About this time Smirnensky wrote his swan song, a penetrating analysi of a revolutionary, who, to change society, tries to capture the government and instead of remaining revolutionary, passes through metamorphosis that leads to his anti-thesis: oppressor, tyrant and bourgois in red or purple. This revolutionary and socialist phraseology, revolutionary outburst and impetus, are ornamental deceptions to reach the summit of the government hierarchy. This is the case of all power-oriented parties and individuals, prophets and revolutionaries: from social-democratic reformists like Hawke to a fundamentalis like Kaddefi, from a socialist like Gonzales to a communist like Castro, not to mention thousands of other cases. They all fit the characteristics of Smirnensky's protagonist in the Tale of the Staircase. A tale worth remembering in our revolutionary pathos. A tale and,yet,the real fabrics of which are made many revolutionaries.

The Tale of the Staircase.

(Decicated to all who will say: that has nothing to do with me).

- Who are you? - ask the Devil.
- I am a plebeian by birth and all tatterdemallion are my brothers! Oh, how ugly is the earth and how unhappy are the people!

Thus has spoken a young man standing in front of a high staircase made of white marble with rosy veins, his forehead erect and his fists clenched. Shooting glances at the distance, where, like muddy waves of a swollen river, has roared the grey rabbles of misery. Undulating, erupting from time to time, raising a forest of dry black hands, a thunder of indignations and furious shouts cut trhough the air and their echo fades down slowly, solemnly as a far-away thunder of distant guns. The rabble is growing, and like yellow clouds of dust comes forward; already some isolated silhouettes appear on the common grey background. A certain old man, stooped to the ground as if he is searching for his lost youth, is approaching. A barefoot little girl, clutching his ragged and tattered garment is looking at the high staircase with her gentle cornflower blue eyes. She is looking and smiling. After them follow shabby grey dried-up figures who, in chorus, alltogether, sing a prolonged funeral song. One sharply whistles, the other, thrusting his hands into his pocket laughs loudly, hoarsely and in his eyes burns folly.
- I am a plebeian by birth and all tatterdemallion are my brothers! Oh, how ugly is the earth and how unhappy are the people! Oh, you up there, you...

Thus has spoken a young man, forehead erect and his fists clenched in threats.
- You, you do hate the people up there, do you? - ask the Devil and cunningly

bends towards the youth.
- Oh, I have to have revenge on those princesand dukes, I will avenge my brothers whose faces are yellow like wax and whose groans are more sinister than the blizzards in December! Look at their bleeding bare flesh! Hear their groans! For their sake I seek revenge! Let me in!
-The Devil smiles.
- I am their policeman and cannot betray them without a bribe.
- But I have no gold. I have nothing to bribe you with... I am a poor fellow, a youth in rags and tatters...
The Devil smiles once again:
Oh, really, I don't ask much, do I? Give me your hearing only!
- My hearing? With pleasure... Let me never hear anything, never...
- You'll hear again! -The Devil reassures him and lets hum pass. Go!

The youth dashes and, at once, jumps three steps, but the hairy hand of the Devil pulls him back.
- That's enough! Stop and listen how your brothers down there are moaning!
The youth has stopped and listened attentively: -Oddly, why, suddenly they have began to sing happily and laugh carelessly?... He dashes again.
The Devil sops him:
-To pass another three steps I ask for your eyes!

The youth trows up his hands:
- But then I will be unable to see my brothers or those on whom I seek revenge!
The Devil:
-You'll be able to see... I will give you better eyes, much better eyes!
The Youth passes three more steps and looks downwards. The Devil reminds him:
-Look at their bare bleeding bodies.
-My God! This is really so strange, when they managed to dress so well! And instead of bleeding wounds their bodies are adorned with beautiful s scarlet roses!...
For every three steps the Devil has received his small bribes. But the youth keeps going, readily giving everything to reach only up there to have revenge on those dukes and princes! One more step, only one more step, and he will be there! He will avenge his brothers!
- I am a plebeian by birth and all tatterdemallion...
- Young man, one more step! One more step and you will have your revenge! But I always take double bribe for this step: give me your heart and your memory.
The youth again throws up his hands:
-My heart? No! This really is cruel!
The Devil laughs vociferously and authoritatively:
- I am not that cruel. Instead, I will give you a golden heart and a new mem-

ory! If you don't accept then you'll never pass this step and will never avenge your brothers, those who have faces like sand and groan worse than the blizzards in December.

The lad glances at the mocking green eyes of the Devil.

- But I will be the most unhappy person. You are taking all things that are human in me.

- On the contrary, -you'll be the happiest one! Only your heart and your memory! Do you agree?

The youth mused upon this. A dark shadow has covered his face, muddy drops of sweat slip from his wringkled forehead; he clenched his fists in anger and mutters between his teeth:

-Let it be! Take them!

...And like a summer storm, enraged and furious, his black hair floating in the air, he passes the last step. He is up! Suddenly a smile flashes on his face, his eyes beam with soft joy and his fists drop. He looks at the revelling dukes, looks at the tattered mob down there, roaring and cursing. He looks but no muscle quivers on his face; his face is bright, cheerful and satisfied. Down there he sees festively dressed crowd whose groans are now hymns.

- Who are you? - hoarsely and mockingly asks the Devil.

- I am prince by birth and the Gods are my brothers! Oh, how beautiful is the earth and how happy are the people!

1. Hristo Smirnensky, Selected Works, September 1948, Sofia, p. 37.

2. Ibid, p, 29

3. Ibid, p. 22.

READ!
WRITE!
DISTRIBUTE!
SUPPORT!

RED AND BLACK

Be generous if you like a regular ANARCHIST publication.

Our indifference is our chain-and we are our own tyrants because we don't do any thing to destroy it.

R. Flores Magnon.

the failure of state communism

Chapter III

The counter "revolutionary activites" of the Russian anarchists, A Bukharin's manoeuvre.

At the final session of the Red Trade-Unions International im Moscow, an important incident occured: Bukharin, who sat at the Congress only as an observer, suddenly, to the great astonishment of the foreign delegates, took the floor and launch a hateful attack against the anarchists. Truly the delegates had a cause to be astonished because only a minority among them were able to cause such a distressing episode.

Shortly after the arrival of the foreign delegates, a special commission was set whose intention was to put to Lenin and another 9 important rep - resentatives of the soviet government a petition demanding the liberation of the imprisoned anarchists and anarcho- syndiczliats. It was promised to the members of the commission that everything possible would be done and it was suggested that no public statement on this unfortunate affair would be made to the Congress. The commission kept its promise and no statement on the imprisoned revoluionaries was made while the Congress was sitting. Then, one might imagine the amazement of the members of the commission, when just before the ending of the Congress, Bukharin, without any motivation, brought the issue to the forum of the Congress. But the amazement was even greater when the French delegate Sirolle, on the behalf of the commission requested the floor to dispute Bukharin's statements, but his request was categorically rejected by Lozovsky. The authoritarian behaviour of the presiden in allowing a non-delegate to speak on an issue that was not on the agenda while flatly refusing the right of a delegate to reply, led to a well - understood uproar in the Congess. The emotions ran so high that the Congress finished in chaos and Lozovsky was forced to cave-in to the general will of the delegates and allow Sirolle to talk; an absolutely necessary concession if a political rupture were to be avoided.

the imprisoned anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists. It was promissed to

Bukharin's intentions were obvious: simply put, he wanted to surprise the Congress and, by doing so, to save his government the trouble to give extra explanations on an uncomfortable and very delicate question. But for

the foreign delegates, who were not used to the Russian practice yet, the manoeuvre was a little bit too much and missed its point.

Bukharin tried to explain that the Russian anarchists should by no means be compared to the anarchists of the other countries because the former are a particular kind of people against whom the Russian government had to defend itself. Simply, the imprisoned anarchist were criminals, supporters of the bandit Makhno, people who were armed, confirmed counter-revolutionaries and so on.

Without any doubt, Mr. Bukharin, in his own way was a skillful man who, had he honoured by his presence, the imfamous anti-anarchist conference in Rome would have not diappoi
ference in Rome would have not disappointed that company. But, unfortunately for him, these affirmations happened not to have the slightest relation to the reality of facts. They were a loose invention of a man who had tried, by all means, to save the threatened prestige of his government even if it had to be done at the expense of the truth.

The majority of the imprisoned anarchists were no longer supporters of Makhno or those who had taken up arms. The reasons for their imprisonment had never been mentioned to them. They had been thrown in dangeons because of their ideas. Some of the most recently imprisoned comrades had asked the agents of the Extraordinary Commission the cause for their imprisonment. The answer was: "You have done nothing but you could have do something." One can imag ine what a storm would occur in a bourgeois state if the police had used such frank cynical language. In fact what is the so called "counter-revolutionary" activity of the Russian anarchists? It suffices to consider a bit closely their role in the Revolution to be convinced that the accusation against them by the Bolsheviks lacked any real foundation and only can be attributed to a malicious calumny for political reasons.

At the out break of the Revolution the anarchists played an important role and were the most active elements of the revolutionary movement as a whole. They published a lot of daily newspapers and their propaganda penetrated deeply into the masses. In Kronstadt, Odessa, Ekaterinobourg and many other important towns the toiling masses sided with anarchism. Among the different anarchist tendencis, the anarcho-communist and the anarcho-syndicalists had the biggest influence.

It was first the anarchists who attacked the provisional government at time when Lenin and the Bolsheviks continued to talk in favour of the National Assembly. The anarchists coined the slogan: "All power to the Soviets" while the Boslsheviks did not know yet what attitude to adopt in relation to the soviets.

Anarchists in the period of the struggle.

When the open struggle against Kerensky government began the anarchists were among the first to set the masses in motion. Before the uprising in Moscow and Petrograd the anarchist workers had already rose in Ekaterinobourg, but even in Moscow and in Petrograd the anarchists were at the head of the movement. It was the anarchist, Anatol Grigorievich Zelezniakov who, leading the Kronstadt sailors, entered the Parliament and dispersed the deputies. On his head Denikin put a price of 400,000 rubles. Zelezniakov fell in the battle against the white guards near Ekaterinoslav on July 1919.

It is an insisputable historical fact that without the energetic anarchist help the Bolsheviks would have never acquired power. The anarchists fought at the most dangerous battlefields. Thus, when the white guards allied themselves with the killer-gangs of the "Hundred Blacks" in Moscow, who barricaded themselves in the hotel Metropol, it was the anarchists who took this bastion by assault, after a bloody battle which lasted three whole days.

In the following passage, an extract from the magazine The New Times, one of our Russian comrades had described the event at that time in vivid manner: "Lenin hurried to publish a decree- his first one - in which he declared that from now on his party would be called the party of communists". This decree which had appeared in the Izvestia declared the government's intention to introduce communism throughout all of Russia. Asked by the anarchist federation of Petrograd to explain what he meant by communism, how he intended to apply it, did he want a free communism or, rather, some kind of communism invented by the Bolsheviks with the aim of putting the worker and peasant masses at the tow of their party, Lenin had replied that he intended seriously to introduce free communism in all Russia, but added, that this could be realized only gradually and, at the same time, asked the energetic collaboration of all anarchist groups if he was to fulfil this difficult and huge task. The anarchist were pretty naive to take these words at their face value but they did and supported the Bolsheviks and the struggle for the common goal.

All this had happened at time when the Bolsheviks were not sure of their near future; when danger was coming from all sides and when the counter-revolutionary elements were at work in all part of the country. Particularly in Petrograd the supporters of the reaction were pretty active. They tried to incite, by all means, the ignorant masses to kill and to loot and thus make the new government collapse. In these events extremely critical for the Bolshevik period, seeing in the anarchists worthwile supporters, they did not hesitated to use them as long as the situation required it, as was the case in December 1917 when Petrograd was a prey to the hordes of sol-

diers returning from the front, and other doubtful elements. These bands, armed-to-the-teeth, reached shops and food depots and looted them with pleasure. The Bolsheviks sent the Red Guards to put an end to the pillage. First they sent the sailors in whom they had some faith. After some timid, tentative action the latter joined the looters and established a common cause with them. In this extremely troublesome situation only the anarchists were capable of opposing these gangs and stopping the looting, but for this they paid dearly and left on the ground many dead and wounded.

Once the danger was over the Bolsheviks began to look at the anarchist organizations with mistrust. In them they saw dangerous enemies; even more dangerous than the counter-revolutionaries because their influence upon the peasants and workers was growing with each day. Everywhere they had started to organize trade-unions and country communities according to their own conceptions. Nonetheless, the Bolshevik government, which was not stable yet, dared not to attack them immediately. But they had begun a vile campeign against them in the Bolshevik press. They also counted on the possibility of attracting the best among the anarchists by offering them official places in the government apparatus, which unfortunately won many among them who, even today (1921) occupy important position in the soviet administration.

Bolshevik massacres and the Anarchist position

After the armistice with Germany the poverty increased even more. For the "peoples' commissars" the remedy was to issue decree after decree which had no effect whatsoever. The anarchists as well as all other serious revolutionaries, seeing what the Bolshevik activities lead to, could not remain indifferent to the general ruin which was threatening the country and the whole population. Together with the Left Social Revolutionaries they began to react against it. Their first task was to create kitchens and shelters for the hungry and homeless pople. But, first of all, they tried to bring together the town and the country workers and to create communist country communities.

Count Mirbach, a representative of the German government in Moscow, made clear to Lenin that a state worthy of its name could not by any means tolerate the activities of people such as the anarchists.

Lenin used this as a pretext to strike at anarchists and ordered an attack on anarchist premisses and their occupation. Thus, on the night of 14 th April 1918,all the buildings the anarchists lived in were encircled and cannons and submachine guns put into action. The shelling continued during the whole night. The battle was so violent that it was believed a foreign army was trying to take the city over. At the morrow, the district where the struggle took place offered an appalling sight. The houses hit by the cannons were transformed into half ruins; in backyards, pavements and among pieces of furniture and fallen walls were lying dead bodies; bloody parts of human bodies

would be seen everywhere; heads, hands, intestines, ears, with even the gutters running with blood. The Bolshevik government triumphed and it was Bela Kun, the future dictator of Hungary who had directed this massacre.

The day after this violent action emotions were running high. The population was indignant and the general protest was so strong that Lenin and Trotsky tried to rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of the people. They argued that they had no intention to attack all anarchists but only those who refused to submit to the dictatorship. As a proof the anarchists who were arrested by the Tcheka were freed, but the anarchist organizations were dissolved, bookshops closed down and anarchist literature burnt. In this case a good half of the anarchist groups were eliminated, and the remaining comrades were languishing behind bars or dispersed throughout the Russian territories just as had happened before under the tsarist regime.

The accuracy of the foregoing facts which have been confirmed since by many Russian comrades well known in the international movement, provide us with a clear picture of the political evolution of Russia.. On the Russian's anarchists' activities and tendencies it will be sufficient to quote the resolution adopted on 25th August 1918 at the congress of the Pan-Russian Anarcho-Syndicalists. The congress took the following resolution:

1..."to fight against capitalism and state power: in view of the needs of production to organize the independent soviets into federations and to undertake the amalgamation of independent peasants and workers organizations.

2. to recommend the creation of free soviets to the workers and to urge them to struggle against the institution of the council of the peoples' commissars, which represents a form of organization that will have nefarious consequences for the working class.

3. to disband the militarist army and, instead, arm the workers and the peasants while, at the same time, explaining to them the outworn notion of the "socialist motherland", since the workers and the peasnats' motherland is the whole world.

4. to fight in a more firm manner against the Czechoslovakian counter-revolutionaries and all imperialist attempts but without forgetting that the ultra revolutionary Bolshevik party is, itself, turning into a conservative and a reactionary one.

5. to put directly the distribution of supplies and consumer goods in the hands of workers' and peasants' organizations; to stop the armed expeditions against the peasants which make latter hostile to the workers and thus weaken the solidarity among them by bringing to the revolutionary front prejudices which benefit only the counter-revolutionaries."

The theoretical and practical values of this resolution may be appreciated in various ways, but to a few of those who are still in possession of their

faculties, yet who, for one or other reason, are not directly involved politically or other ways, they by no means can qualify such activities and demands as counter-revolutionary. On the contrary, the later development in Russia has proved that our comrades have judged the situation correctly and many of their predictions literally have taken place.

Never have the Russian anarchists been at service of reaction. They have done what has been within their possibilites. As a matter of fact they had always been among the first to combat any counter-revolutionary manoeuvres. They risked their lives in the defense of the Revolution and made immeasurable sacrifices of lives. Hence, to treat them as counter-revolutionaries is an infamy even if it is done in the interest of the "communist" government or party.

As long as the Bolsheviks had needed the anarchists they had not branded them as counter-revolutionaries in the eyes of the world. On the contrary, to their own followers, the Bolshevik press had quoted the anarchists as an example of revolutionary energy and firmness. In fact many present "heads" of the party needed such an example. We need only mantion not very heroic role played by Zinoviev and Kamenev during the eventful days preceding the October upheaval in 1917. They were the keenest opponents of, and tried to prevent by all means, the very upheaval which finally brought them to power. None else but Lenin himself publicly accused them of cowardice, lack of character and reproached them of "having forgotten all fundamental Bolshevik ideas. and proletarian revolutionary internationalism". Yet, because later they made an honourable change in good and in due form, they were re-integrated in the 'community of saints'.

Nonetheless, such a past did not prevent the same people from treating everyone who refused to dance to the sound of their music as canter-revolutionary. This would have been a comical farce if, at the same time, it had not been so unspeakably tragic. It brings to mind the words of the famous " prefect of the Paris' barricades", Caussidiere on the subject of Bakunin in 1848: " What a man! In the first day of the revolution he does simply wonders but he ought to be shot on the second day".

everyone who refused to dance to the sound of their music as counter-revol-

This was exactly the policy the Bolsheviks applie to anarchists: in the first day, they crown them, in the second - they cruci

This was exactly the policy the Bolsheviks applied to anarchists: in the first day, they crown them, in the second - they crucify them. But would any politicians or men in power, at all times and in all countries, do differently? The Bolsheviks have proved that they are no exception to the rule.

Chapter IV

Nestor Makhno and the Bolsheviks

It is necessary to say a few words about Nestor Makhno and his movement which have been dealt with in a most virulent manner by the Bolshevik press. It is interesting to see how the Bolheviks used the same methods against him as well as against the anarchists in general: to eulogize and condemn according to the demands of circumstances. At one time the Bolshevik press would declare Makhno as a counter-revolutionary of the worst possible kind, allied to Denikin and Vrangel; the other time, the same press would extol him as a good revolutionary, allied to the soviet government. Nothing astonishing then, when later on, the most aburd rumours were to be circulated about him and the motives of his activities.
then, when later on, the most absurd rumours were to be circulated about him

A well known comrade, and a long time friend in Moscow, sent us the following biographic sketch which defines well the personality of this leader of the Ukrainian partisans: "Nestor Makhno, at about 30 years of age is an ordinary peasant who has been an active member of the revolutionary movement since 1901. He then belonged to an anarchist revolutionary group. For the killing of a policeman in the province of Ekaterinoslav he was condemned to death. Due to his young age, his death sentence was commuted to hard labour for life. Freed by the revolution of 1917, he went back to his native country and took part in the organizing of country people

In the beginning of 1918 began the reaction in the Ukraine. Austrians, Germans and the forces of Hetman (military commander) Skoropadsky governed the country by a policy of mass executions and violent persecutions of peasants, workers and revolutionaries. Makhno and his comrades had founded a militant group which had been engaged in a most determined struggle against the foreign troups and the Hetman's police. Their success quickly increased the number of their followers and their small group soon numbered 200. At the end of the year he had a considerable army of insurgents. Once the Ukraine had been freed from the foreign soldiers and the armed bands of Skoropadsky, Makhno began a fight against Petliura.

Ammunition blackmail and slander

Once Petliura had been defeated, the Bolshevisk occupied the Ukraine. As an anarchist, Makhno could not make a common cause with them even they made to him the most inviting promises, for example they nominated him as a commander of the Ukrainian armed forces, on the condition that he agreed to operate under Trotsky's orders. This Makhno refused, because it was impossible for him to collaborate with people whose sole aim was to capture power. Instead, he began to agitate among thepeople and to organize the struggle against the new reactionary army of Denikin, while the Bosheviks refused to entrust the struggle to an insurgent army. Not being sufficiently strong to

march against Makhnovists, the Bolsheviks thought to break Makhno's resistance by refusing to supply him with ammunition. Trotsky said that he would not deliver any weapons unless Makhno yield to the orders of the Red Army. Thus Makhno and his partisans found themselves in a very dangerous situation, between the devil and the deep sea, between Denikin and the Red Army with around 50,000 people but virtually no ammunition. He had fough almost alone against the Hetman and against Petliura. At that time the Red Army was extremely weak and badly organized but the Bolsheviks nonetheless (naturally for the sake of their own interests), abundantly supplied him then with weapons. Now suddenly, on the pretext that Makhnovists were an army of insurgents, they were denied the very right of existence, simply because Makhno had not yielded to Trotsky's command.

Trotsky believed that by refusing to supply the Makhnovists with weapons he would force them into subservience. When he realized that Makhno would not change his mind, he decied to destroy him by all means. On 29 th of April, 1919, at a meeting in Kharkov, he referred to Makhno as an ordinary bandit and declared that he preferred to see the Ukraine be occupied by the Whites rather than leaving it to the Makhnovists, because, he had argued, if Denikin had the Ukraine in his hands the peasants themselves would call the Bolsheviks.

This explains why Makhno was left without weapons and why the Red Army withheld their fire while Denikin, in his furious attack against the disararmed Makhnovists was breaking their front. The Red Army was forced to withdraw also but the purpose of Trotsky's tactic was achieved: Makhno was defeated completely and forced, with the rest of his army, to abandon the battle-field. At the same time, the Bolsheviks' press explained the retreat of the Red Army as a betrayal by Makhno, whom the soviet government outlawed. Makhno's brother, being mistaken for Makhno, was shot dead while in a hospital.

Thanks to the defeat of Makhno, Denikin gained a great advantage. His troops defeated the Red Army and triumphantly penetrated Russia. In this critical situation Makhno, somehow, succeeded to re-organize his partisans and by a bold suprise, attacked Denikin from behind, and cut his supplies of amunition and supplies. The Red Army, once again, was in a position to take the offensive and the Bolshevik press recognized once more the revolutionary qualities of Makhno and the government repealed the decree which had outlawed this alleged "leader of the bandits". But soon after the devinite defeat of Denikin, Trotsky demanded that the Makhnovists be disarmed and when the latter refused, he declared Makhno a bandit once again and outlawed him. The hard battle in which Makhno and the Bolsheviks were engaged and which, often, had taken terrible forms, did not reach a definite end until Wrangel came to the scene which opened a new phase in the relationships between the Soviet Government and the Makhnovists. "

This information from our Russian comrade, in all its details, has been confirmed since by many others with first hand information. For

example, in fromt of me lies a manuscript of 114 pages on the Maknovist movement, sent to me from Russia, in which all facts of general nature reported above are supported by documents. As soon as possible this material will be published allowing thereby the reader to form a clear perception of Makhno and his movement and, at the same time, completely destroy the legends forged by the Bolsheviks about Makhno and his cause.

Against Wrangel -the Bolshevik Government signs an accord with Makhno.

At the beginning of 1920 Makhno simultaneously faught against Wrangel and the Bolsheviks. But suddenly the situation took a dramatic turn for the Bolsheviks and the Government was forced to look for help from him. The war with Poland seriously exhausted the Russian military forces and the Red Army could not stop Wrangel's impetuous push as he was liberally equipped with modern arms supplied by the powers of the Entente. Faced with a danger which could have grave consequences for the Soviet Government, the latter decided to contact the "bandit" Makhno, whom the Soviet Government,
press had not ceased to refer as "an ally of the white 'baron' Wrangel."

On the 16 th of October, the following treaty was signed between the Soviet Government and Makhno.

Preliminary political and military agreement between the Soviet Ukrainian Republic and the Maknovists (the Ukrainian Revolutionary Insurrectionary army.

1. The Ukrainian Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army (Mkhnovists) will join the armed forces of the Republic as a partisan army, subordinate, in regard to operations, to the supreme command of the Red Army; it will retain its established internal structure, and does not have to adopt the bases and principles of the regular Red Army.

2. While crossing Soviet territory at the front, or going between fronts, the Insurrectionary Army will accept into its ranks neither detachments of, nor deserters from, the Red Army.

Remarks:
a). The units of the Red Army as well as isolated Red soldiers who have met and joined the Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army behind the Wrangel front shall re-enter the ranks of the Red Army when they again contact it.

b). The Makhnovist insurgents behind the Wrangel front, as well as all men at present in the Insurrectionary Army, will remain there, even if they were previously mobilized by the Red Army.

3. For the purpose of destroying the common enemy - the White Army -

the Ukrainian Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army (Mkhnovists) will inform the working masses who collaborate with it, of the agreement that has been concluded; it will call upon the people to cease all military actions hostile to the Soviet Power; for its part, the Soviet power will immediately publish the clauses of the agreement.

4. The families of the combatants of the Makhnovist Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army living in the territory of the Soviet Republic shall enjoy the same rights as those of soldiers of the Red Army, and for this purpose shall be supplied by the Soviet Government of the Ukraine with the necessary documents.

Political agreement

1. Immediate release of all Makhnovists and anarchists imprisoned or in exile in the territories of the Soviet Rupublic; cessation of all persecutions of Makhnovists or anarchists, except those who carry on armed conflict against the Soviet Government.

2. Complete freedom in all forms of public expression and propaganda for all Makhnovists and anarchists, for their principles and ideas, in speech and the press, with the exception of anything that might call for the violent overthrow of the Soviet Government, and on condition that the requirements of military censorship be respected. For all kinds of publications, the Makhnovists and anarchists, as revolutionary organizations recognized by the Soviet Government, may make use of the technical apparatus of the Soviet State, while naturally submitting to the technical rules for publication.

3. Free participation in elections to the Soviets; and the right of Makhnovists and anarchists to be elected thereto. Free participation in the organization of the forthcoming Fifth Pan-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets, which will take place next December.

Signed: Bela Kun- V. Popov.

On the base of this agreement the Makhnovist Insurrectionary Army and the Red Army faught against Wrangel side by side. Succes came in no time: the third week saw, indeed, the complete defeat of the "white baron's" army, the remnants of which ran desperately towards south pursued by the Red Army.

New Bolshevik Betrayals and Slanders

Then what happened? As soon as Wrangel's hordes were definitely defeated, the Soviet Government broke its treaty with Makhno in the most vile manner and the Red Army, suddenly turned against its old allies and crushed them in most savage way. Makhno who saved himself at time was, once again, declared a "bandit" and a "traitor" by the Bolsheviks. All anarchists who, due to the agreement with Makhno, were, until then enjoying freedom were re-arrested. Among them were Makhnos friends Tchubenko and Voline and

many others.

These facts today represent the true historical development of the Makhnovist movement. The simple facts we have given account of, are a clear indication that Makhno is neither a traitor nor a counter-revolutionary and all noises about him and his movement circulated by the Bolsheviks are obvious lies serving the "raison d'Etat". If someone has a cause to complain of betrayal, and a betrayal in the worst possible sense, it is Makhno. A real betrayal occured not only against him but against the cause of the Revolution too, when in the Spring of 1919 the Bolsheviks left him without any help and weapons, and thus made way for the defeat and the break up of the insurgents by Denikin. There was a betrayal of first degree in the manner by which the Soviet Government violated the agreement it had signed with Makhno, a behaviour that reminds us of the political methods of Ceasar Borgia.

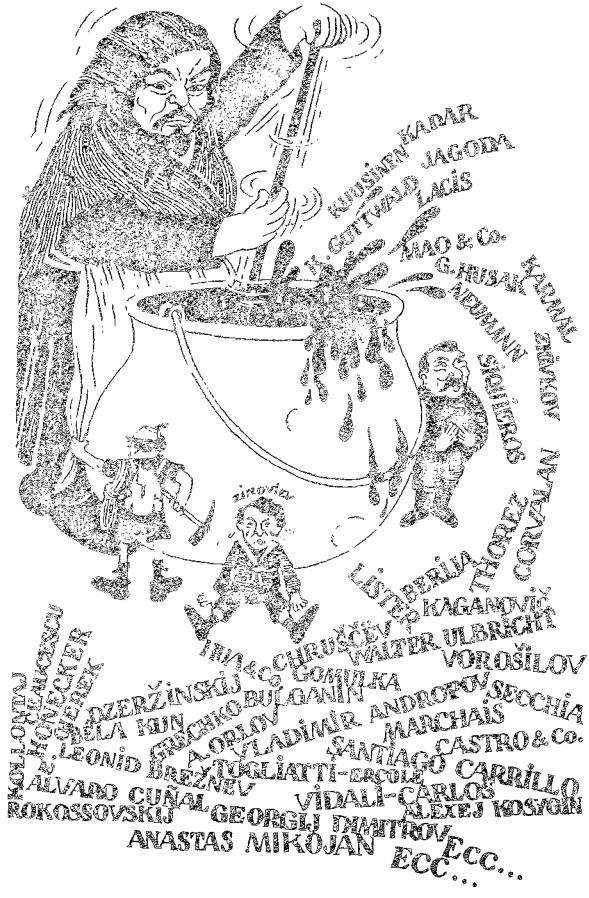
Even if, in the above agreement the revolutionary character of its movement was recognized, the Soviet government constantly tried to present Makhno as a counter- revolutionary. Today, it still brands him as a common criminal and a bandit. Yet, we have to ask ourselves the question, why does a government which is, or loves to call itself, a communist government, doh
sign an agreement of great military and political importance with such an individual? What , then, are those who established analliance with such a hight way robber and tie themselves to him by a contract? What, actually, the Government has not said, is that it is they who are the real bandits, they who decided to sign the accord with Makhno. This granted, then in no way can the Government's behaviour be said to be justifiable. Their behaviour had been obvious at the time when the existence of Makhno and his army was threatened by Denikin; when they were left alone to their destiny. Their withdrawing of the necessary support to Makhno even endangered the position

of the Red Army. But they, the Bolsheviks, had to sacrifice Makhno, in their desire to get rid of him.
individual. What, then, are those who established an alliance with such a

The Moscow statesmen knew quite well that Makhno was not a bandit. They knew that Makhno had fought for a state of affairs directly opposed to theirs and not, thus, corresponding to one they had established. They, also knew that this man, who saved Russia from the counter-revolution, could in no way be described as a counter-revolutionary. All this is well known to the leaders of the Bolshevik government, but because Makhno and his movement have refused to be integrated into their structure, they have to be eliminated by any means whatsoever. For that reason Makhno is "a bandit", a "traitor" and a "counter-revolutionary". He cannot, indeed, be anything else; as must all anarchists in general, and any revolutionary tendencies which have refused to recite the Boslshevik credo. That all Bolshevik accusations

are false, is a fact of no importance. The lie is always one of the rules in the arena of all diplomacies and as such, it cannot be dismissed from the so-called "proletarian diplomacy"

(to be continued)



Bolshevik Communism: A factory for gramophone records.

PAGES OF SOCIALIST HISTORY.

V.

THE CONCENTRATION OF CAPITAL.

I must beg my readers to pardon the following figures and my dry method of treatment. There is a deep seated error in some of our Socialist arguments, and, I think, it may be well worth while to spend a few minutes in looking into the matter.

Every historical epoch, every political party, has been stained by some erroneous, and often mischievous, idea, which was, nevertheless, at that time, admitted by all the world as undoubted fact, and accepted by men of capacity and talent, as well as by the commonplace persons who merely swallow the opinions of their neighbors. And when it has happened that a false appreciation has been set forth and formulated in "scientific" or "philosophic" style, its injurious domination has extended over generations.

Now we, Socialists, without distinction of party or school, all share in just such an error. I speak of the law of the concentration of capital, formulated by Marx, and repeated by Socialist writers or speakers the world over. Go into a Socialist meeting, take up the first Socialist publication you see, and you will hear or read that capital, according to the scientific law of its being, tends to concentrate in the hands of a smaller and smaller number of capitalists, that large fortunes are created at the expense of smaller fortunes, and that great capitals are increased by the extinction of little ones. This widespread formula lies at the root of the parliamentary tactics of State Socialists. From this point of view, the solution of the Social question, conceived by the great founders of modern Socialism as a complete regeneration of the individual, as well as of society, both economically and morally—becomes delightfully simple and easy. No need for an economic struggle day by day between exploiter and exploited; no need to begin here and now endeavoring to practice brotherly relations between man and man; nothing of the sort. It is enough that the workers should vote for members of parliament who call themselves Socialists, that the number of these M. P.'s should increase to the extent of a majority in the House, that they should decree State Collectivism or Communism, and all exploiters will peaceably submit to the decision of parliament. The capitalists will have no choice but unresisting submission, for, according to the law of the concentration of capital, their numbers

will be reduced to an infinitesimal proportion of the nation.

What a fine and easy prospect! Just think: without effort or suffering on our part, the inevitable law of the concentration of capital is preparing for us a future of bliss. It is so attractive to face the frightful difficulties of a complicated problem thru rose-tinted spectacles, especially when we are soothed by the genuine conviction that modern science and philosophy have taught us the consoling truth. And this so-called "law," as set forth by Marx, is coated with all the appearance of philosophy and science.

"The capitalist mode of appropriation, the result of the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property. This is the first negation of individual private property, as founded on the labor of the proprietor. But capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a law of nature, its own negation. It is the negation of negation. . . . This expropriation [of many capitalists by few] is accomplished by the action of the imminent laws of capitalist production itself, by the centralization of capital. . . . Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolize all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation." ("Capital," Vol. II., pp. 788-9, English ed.)

Yes, poverty grows, but not among the middle classes, not among the small capitalists; rather among the workers, the producers.

It is thirty-five years since the publication of "Capital"; full fifty years have gone by since Marx formulated that law which must act "as the metamorphoses in nature." It is, therefore, highly probable that the law should be exemplified by at least some few economic phenomena. During this period production and exchange have received an unheard of impetus, private fortunes amounting to millions have been accumulated, colossal companies have developed their resources; according to the law the number of small capitalists ought to have diminished; at least *no increase ought to have taken place in their numbers.* Let us see what English statistics have to say in this matter. I limit myself to England, because this country is famed, above all things, as a land of capitalist production; because Marx himself based all his dialectical speculations on the analysis of English economic life. The figures I quote are well known.

The national wealth of this country has increased since the beginning of the century as follows:—

ESTIMATED IN MILLIONS OF POUNDS STERLING.

	1812	1840	1860	1888
Houses	255	280	350	414
Railways	—	21	348	865
Shipping	15	23	44	134
Merchandise	50	70	190	344
Furniture	130	370	580	1,212
	450	764	1,162	2,969

These figures very clearly indicate the true source whence great fortunes spring. Taking the sum total of wealth, without counting the value of houses, we see that the modest sum of £195,000,000 in 1812 is transformed in 1888 into £2,555,000,000; or, in other words, the national wealth in our days is 13.1 greater than in those of our grandfathers, and is possessed by 158,600 rich families, and 730,500 middle-class families, out of the 37,888,153 inhabitants of the United Kingdom. A like progress in the increase of wealth is to be observed in all civilized countries.

In France, according to the tables of Fournier de Flux and Yves Guyot, the estimated figures are:—

ESTIMATED IN MILLIONS OF POUNDS STERLING.

	1826	1840	1873	1888
Houses	510	720	1,158	1,704
Railways	—	10	270	532
Shipping	7	7	12	15
Merchandise	19	23	120	155
Furniture	255	360	675	852

For the better understanding of the method of distribution, we will consult the statistics of probate, legacy, and succession duties, according to the English official returns in the years 1886-89. It appears that there were at that time:—

Class.	No. of Households.	Average per Death.	Aggregate in Millions of Pounds Sterling.
Millionaires	700	£855,000	599
Very rich	9,650	£190,000	1,834
Rich	148,250	£26,500	3,928
Middle	730,500	£3,200	2,336
Struggling	2,008,000	£340	680
Poor	3,916,000	—	—

This is a summary of distribution in our own days. Let us see how the figures vary since 1845-50, when Marx's law was formulated.

In	1841—50	average per death	.....	£99.
"	1861—70	" " "	.....	£160.
"	1871—80	" " "	.....	£210.
"	1881—85	" " "	.....	£235.

Counting the average of increase at £5 a year, it appears that in the present year each subject of her majesty might dispose of about £280, or each working family of £1,540. And people would try to persuade us that the England of today would not be capable of realizing comfort for all its children! But to return to our figures; according to the same official returns, there were in

1840	fortunes over	£5,000.....	1,989
1877	" "	"	4,478
1840	"	of from £100 to £5,000....	17,936
1877	"	" " " "	36,438

From 1876, the increase of probate, legacy, and succession duties, and that of the income tax took place as follows:—

In the years	Probate, etc.	Income tax.
1876—77	£5,860,781	£ 5,280,000
1880—81	6,657,393	10,650,000
1884—85	7,720,195	12,000,000
1888—89	6,557,886	12,700,000
1890—91	7,443,290	13,250,000
1892—93	9,637,872	13,925,000

It must not be forgotten that estates under £100 escape the probate court. As wealth increases, there is nothing strange in the fact that the revenue of the State increases also. But what changes may be observed in the numbers of those from whom the duties and taxes are levied? Who are the spoilt children of our modern culture? It seems the middle classes as a whole.

In 1840 there were only 5.4 per cent of the whole population who annually paid £20 and more as income tax. In 1880 the proportion had risen to 14.5 per cent. Since 1850 the increase in the number of taxpayers earning more than £200 per annum only was:—

In the year	Total No. assessed.	No. per 10,000 inhabitants

1850	65,389	23
1860	85,530	30
1870	130,375	42
1880	210,430	63
1886	250,000	70

It will be seen that in thirty-six years the number of taxpayers with a yearly income above £200 has tripled. It remains to be seen if this increase has not been brought about for the benefit of the rich by the poverty of the petty capitalists. To avoid any pretext for objections, I will confine myself exclusively to the results of commerce and banking, as summed up by Schedule D of the income tax. Let us compare the figures for two different years, twenty years apart, so that the influence of the so-called law may be able to show itself. Let us take the numbers of taxpayers in 1868-69 and in 1889. One item only, that of 92,593, is not for 1869, but for 1875-76. Here are the tables:—

Income in £	Number of Taxpayers.		Increase per cent.
	1868—69	1889	
From £150—200...	92,593	162,714	
300...	57,650	106,761	77.7
400...	24,854	45,133	
500...	12,421	18,462	
	187,518	333,070	145,552
600...	9,528	11,964	
700...	5,485	7,423	30.0
800...	3,410	4,671	
900...	3,059	3,961	
	21,482	28,019	6,537
1,000...	1,222	1,831	
2,000...	8,959	11,850	33.6
3,000...	2,666	3,562	
4,000...	1,320	1,692	
	14,167	18,935	4,768
5,000—10,000...	1,360	1,859	
10,000—50,000...	740	969	35.0
50,000 and over..	52	79	
	2,152	2,907	755

The results of this table do not seem somehow to accord with our so-called law. Just the opposite.

The numbers neither of potentates of capital nor of smaller capitalists are diminished. The number of the latter increases far more rapidly than that of the potentates. While the increase in the numers of the rich is 30 per cent, that in the lower ranks of the middle class is 77 per cent. While the preachers of inaction were soothing the people with the idea that the number of exploiters was gradually diminishing, those numbers have in reality tripled between 1840 and our own times. Where, then, has the action of this metaphysical German law of the exploitation of the greater number of capitalists by the smaller managed to hide itself? How does it happen that a law, acting with the absolute certainty of the metamorphoses of nature, shows itself in real life by results of exactly the opposite sort? Simply because no such law exists. We have been saddled with this absurdity by German metaphysics, the injurious influence of which, especially among Russians, has been as great in morals and in art as in Socialism, whither it was imported by Marx and Engels.

For forty years a more than Mahometan neo-fatalism has been taught to the workers of the civilized world! Not only by ambitious pretenders like Guesde and the new German aristocrats known as "Socialist" deputies, but by valuable and courageous men; men of genius like W. Morris, and of ability and education like H. M. Hyndman.

It is difficult to estimate the evil which this imaginary law has worked in modern Socialism. Thanks to it, Marx and Engels, in the "Communist Manifesto," laid down the dictum that the emancipation of the working classes must be brought about by a class war, this war being a political struggle. It underlies all Social Democratic tactics. Thanks to it, we are hampered by such absolute nonsense as that the social question is merely a matter of political reform. Finally, it gave the aforesaid new German aristocracy the effrontery to present the following to the International Labor Congress at Zürich as a *Socialist* resolution:—

"The struggle against class domination and exploitation must be a political one, having the conquest of political power for its end."

This is totally false. The power of the ruling class is based on the wealth produced by the people, which is appropriated by the said classes. Consequently, to free themselves from this domination, the people must refuse to yield up the fruit of their toil to their masters. It is not by a political, but by an economic struggle; not ballot-boxes, but by strikes; not by a decision of parliament, but by a well organized and triumphant general strike that the people can inaugurate a new era; the era of economic

and social equality, of solidarity, enlightened, not by metaphysics, but by thoro and truly scientific instruction.

We have seen that, despite the imaginary law of Marxist metaphysicians, the number of exploiters increases. Consequently, the number of upholders of the existing order, with its advantages of misery and ignorance, instead of decreasing in proportion to the "constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital," is growing. It was, in fact, tripled between 1850 and 1889, while the population was growing at the rate of less than 40 per cent. This result has been obtained from the official figures of Blue Books; but if we consult the works of well known specialists, like Mulhall or Giffen, who take a somewhat longer period of time, our results will be still more striking. Let us dwell awhile upon the standard works of these authors, for their figures are taken from the very date when Engels and Marx began preaching economic fatalism, social reform by an all powerful State, and political legalism in economic affairs.*

From Mulhall's "Dictionary of Statistics" and "Fifty Years of National Progress," and R. Giffen's "Essays on Finance," it appears:—

First, that the number of property owners dying was, in

Year	Number of Probates.	Amount of Property.	Amount per Estate.
1833	25,368	£54,887,255	£2,160
1882	55,359	£140,360,854	£2,500
Increase	29,991	£85,473,599	£340

"We have the fact that these classes (capitalist) are themselves increasing. They may be only a minority of the nation, tho I think a considerable minority, as 55,000 estates passing in a year represent from 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 persons as possessing property *subject to probate duty.*" (Giffen, p. 396.)

Second, income tax was paid—

Year	From £150 to £500.	From £1,000 and over.
1843	By 87,946 men.	By 7,923 men.
1889	" 333,970 "	" 21,842 "
Increase	270 per cent.	Only 228 per cent.

(Id.)

Third, since 1840, the growth of the possessing classes has, according to Mulhall ("Fifty Years of National Progress," p. 24), been four times as quick as that of the population as a whole. It is admitted that in 1840, 97,675 men died owning less than £100, while in 1877 this number had already fallen to 92,447, and yet the population had increased more than 26 per cent (Id.).

Fourth, reckoning the number of shops and stores—

Year	Numbers.	Rent.
1875	295,000	£14,300,000
1886	366,000	£18,900,000
Increase in 11 years.	71,000	£4,600,000

(Mulhall's "Dictionary.")

It appears that Whitely, Maple, Shoolbred, the Army and Navy, and Civil Service Stores, etc., have in no wise diminished the numbers of parasitic shopkeepers, those petty capitalists whom John S. Mill described so repulsively, and over whose fate Guesde and other Marxist orators so often weep; for, according to the fancied law, they are being devoured by the big shops.

Fifth, in the typically capitalistic operations of banking the like increase in the number of property owners is to be observed.

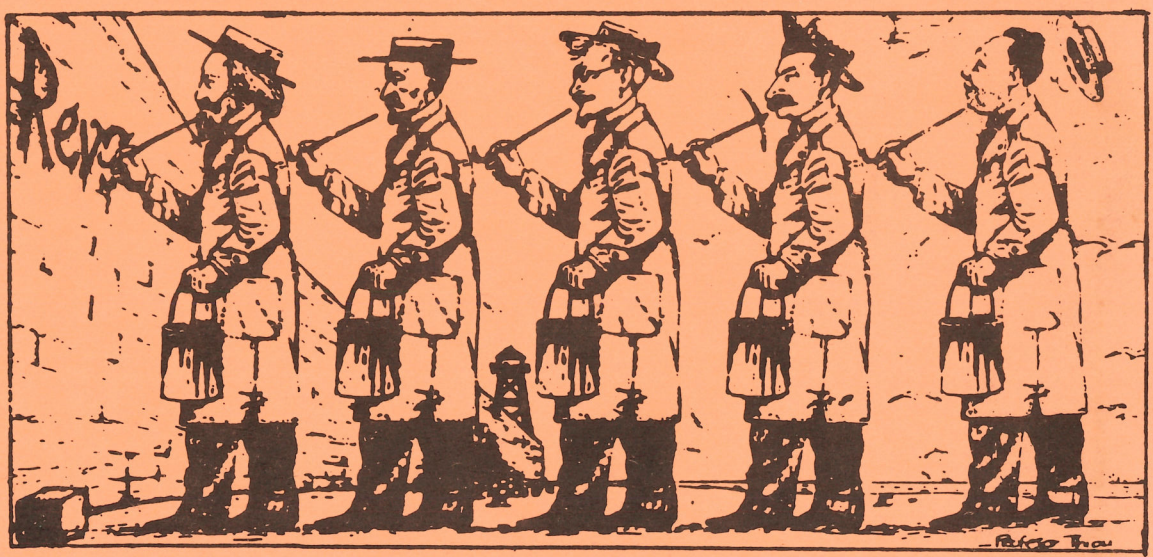
"There are (1886) 140 joint stock banks in the United Kingdom, with an aggregate paid-up capital and reserve of £100,000,000, held by *90,000 shareholders*. . . . This does not include 47 colonial banks." (Mulhall's "Fifty Years of National Progress," p. 66.)

No matter from which side we approach the question, the number of exploiters always and everywhere augments. It is something more than simple to continue repeating the absurd statement that the number of owners of capital being reduced by an inevitable law to an infinitesimal minority, the middle classes will gently submit to expropriation voted by parliament. If, in 1848, they reddened the streets of Paris in their struggle against the Socialistic demands of the victorious people, we may be sure beforehand of their conduct in future, for their numbers have tripled. The Bloody Week of 1871 is not too favorable an augury for optimists and parliamentarians.

* The Marxists pretend that their master first gave a materialistic explanation of history. We shall afterwards see how the ideas of Vico, of Locke, of St. Simon, of Quetelet, of Buckle, and of T. Rogers were attributed to Marx. Here I wish merely to point out the tremendous contradiction involved in saying that economic struggle and development are the dominant factors in human life, and therefore that the workers, to obtain their economic and social emancipation, must above all else, devote themselves to political and legal contests.

Using a drawing by Gerald Jarman 1964 Hayward Gal.

ARTHUR MOYSE


Pers